

THE FIRESCAPE

A home in a woodland setting is surrounded by forest fuel that can burn under the right conditions. 99% of fires in Maryland are started by people, and often burn in areas where homes intermingle with forest fuels.

FIREWISE LANDSCAPING can create a LINE OF DEFENSE against the threat of wildfire by creating a safety zone or “defensible space” around the home.

The goal is to BREAK THE CHAIN of fuel between the home and the forest. Examine the yard for fuels that can catch fire and carry it to the house, as well as areas that can catch fire from wind-blown embers.

WHAT TO DO

You can landscape for fire protection while maintaining a desirable look for your land. Consider hardiness zones, soil types, and available moisture when choosing plants. Place plants far enough apart that fire cannot spread from one to another. Do not place plants close enough to the house to allow flame contact. Maintain a green, mowed lawn that is free of debris.

ALL PLANTS BURN!

There are no fireproof plants, but some plants are more fire-resistant than others. When considering what plants to use in your landscape, choose plants with:

- A high moisture content in the leaves
- A low oil or resin content
- Minimal litter and debris accumulation
- Minimal dead branches
- A low overall height
- An open, loose branching habit
- Easy maintenance and pruning
- Drought resistance
- Good adaptation to the local climate and soil conditions

A FEW SUGGESTED PLANTS:

Common Name (Scientific Name)

LARGE DECIDUOUS TREES:

- Native Oaks(Quercus spp.)
Native Maples (Acer spp.)
Sweetgum (Liquidambar styraciflua)
Black Walnut.....(Juglans nigra)
Yellow Poplar(Liriodendron tulipifera)
Sweetbay Magnolia(Magnolia virginiana)
River Birch(Betula nigra)

MEDIUM-SIZED DECIDUOUS TREES:

- Eastern Redbud.....(Cercis canadensis)
Flowering Dogwood..... (Cornus florida)
Persimmon (Diospyros virginiana)
Native Serviceberries(Amelanchier spp.)
Apple and Crabapple(Malus spp.)

SHRUBS:

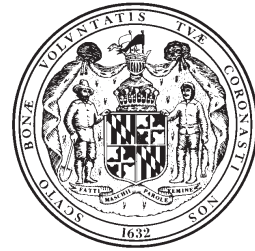
- Witch-hazel(Hamamelis virginiana)
Elderberry(Sambucus canadensis)
Arrowwood Viburnum(Viburnum dentatum)
Common Lilac(Syringa vulgaris)
Bush Dogwoods(Cornus spp.)
Forsythia(Forsythia spp.)
Bottlebrush Buckeye.....(Aesculus parviflora)
Bearberry.....(Arctostaphylos uva-ursi)
American Hazelnut(Corylus americana)
Winterberry Holly.....(Ilex verticillata)

GROUND COVERS:

- Wintergreen.....(Gaultheria procumbens)
Candytuft(Iberis sempervirens)
Monkeygrass(Ophiopogon japonicus)
Pachysandra(Pachysandra terminalis)
Moss-Phlox(Phlox subulata)
Sweetbox(Sarcococca hookerana)
Stonecrop.....(Sedum spp.)
Violet(Viola spp.)

FIRE-PRONE PLANTS TO AVOID WITHIN 30 FEET OF THE HOUSE:

- Junipers and Cedars.....(Juniperous spp.)
Pines.....(Pinus spp.)
Spruce.....(Picea spp.)
Hemlock(Tsuga spp.)
Arborvitae(Thuja occidentalis)
Tall Ornamental Grasses



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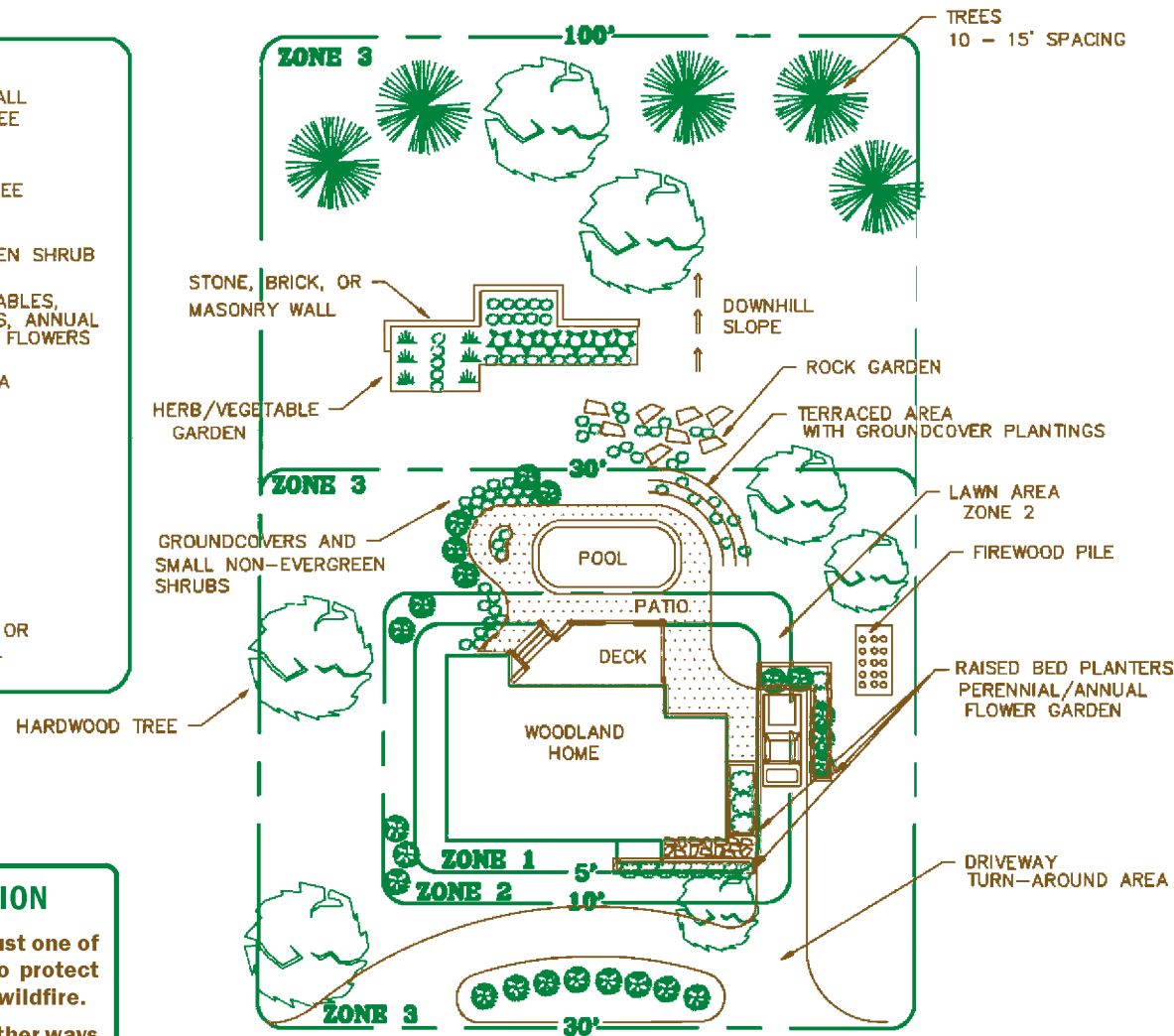
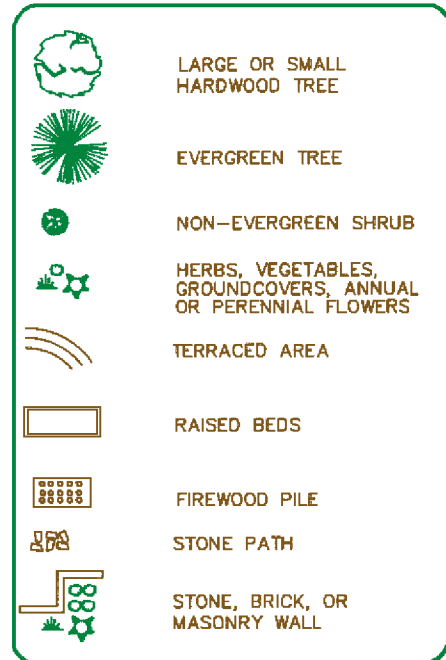


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FIREWISE LANDSCAPING FOR WOODLAND HOMES



LANDSCAPING FOR FOREST FIRE PROTECTION



MORE INFORMATION

Firewise Landscaping is just one of the steps you can take to protect your home and family from wildfire.

For more information on other ways you can be Firewise, go to:

www.firewise.org
or
www.dnr.maryland.gov/forests

WOODLAND HOME PROTECTION ZONES

ZONE 1: 0-5 FEET FROM THE HOUSE

This area, closest to the house, is the most critical for fire protection. The goal for this zone is to prevent any flames from touching the house. Remove any highly flammable plants or debris that touch or are within a few feet of the house. If plant cover is desired, use firewise plant varieties instead of evergreens.

Use crushed brick or decorative gravel in place of flammable mulches. Keep the gutters and roof clean, and remove dead leaves that are under the deck or against the house. Use raised flower beds, large decorative rocks, stone walkways, patios, or other features to create visual interest while maintaining a fuel break.

ZONE 2: 5-10 FEET FROM THE HOUSE

In Zone 2, the goal is to stop the spread of an approaching wildfire. Maintain a well-kept lawn that is free of flammable debris. Avoid using evergreens that catch fire easily and burn quickly. Occasional trees and shrubs in this zone should be placed far enough apart to prevent the spread of fire from one to another.

Keep all landscape plants in good health and prune dead limbs from trees and shrubs. Move firewood piles at least 30 feet from the house.

ZONE 3: 10-30 FEET FROM THE HOUSE

When properly landscaped, Zone 3 will slow or stop any approaching wildfire, while providing an area for firefighters to defend the house. As in the other zones, a well-maintained lawn is the best defense against a wildfire. Place landscape plants or other features far enough apart to allow firefighters to move and work. If the house is situated on a steep slope, Zone 3 should be extended to 100 feet on the downslope side.

If you live in a pine forest, remove "ladder fuels" that can allow a fire to spread from the ground into the limbs of the trees. This includes dead branches, vines, and highly flammable shrubs.

OTHER STRUCTURES:

Firewise landscaping practices should be extended to include all outbuildings and sheds. Wooden fences should be kept Firewise, or separated from any buildings with a section of metal fencing. Special attention should be paid to decks, which are often the most vulnerable part of a house.